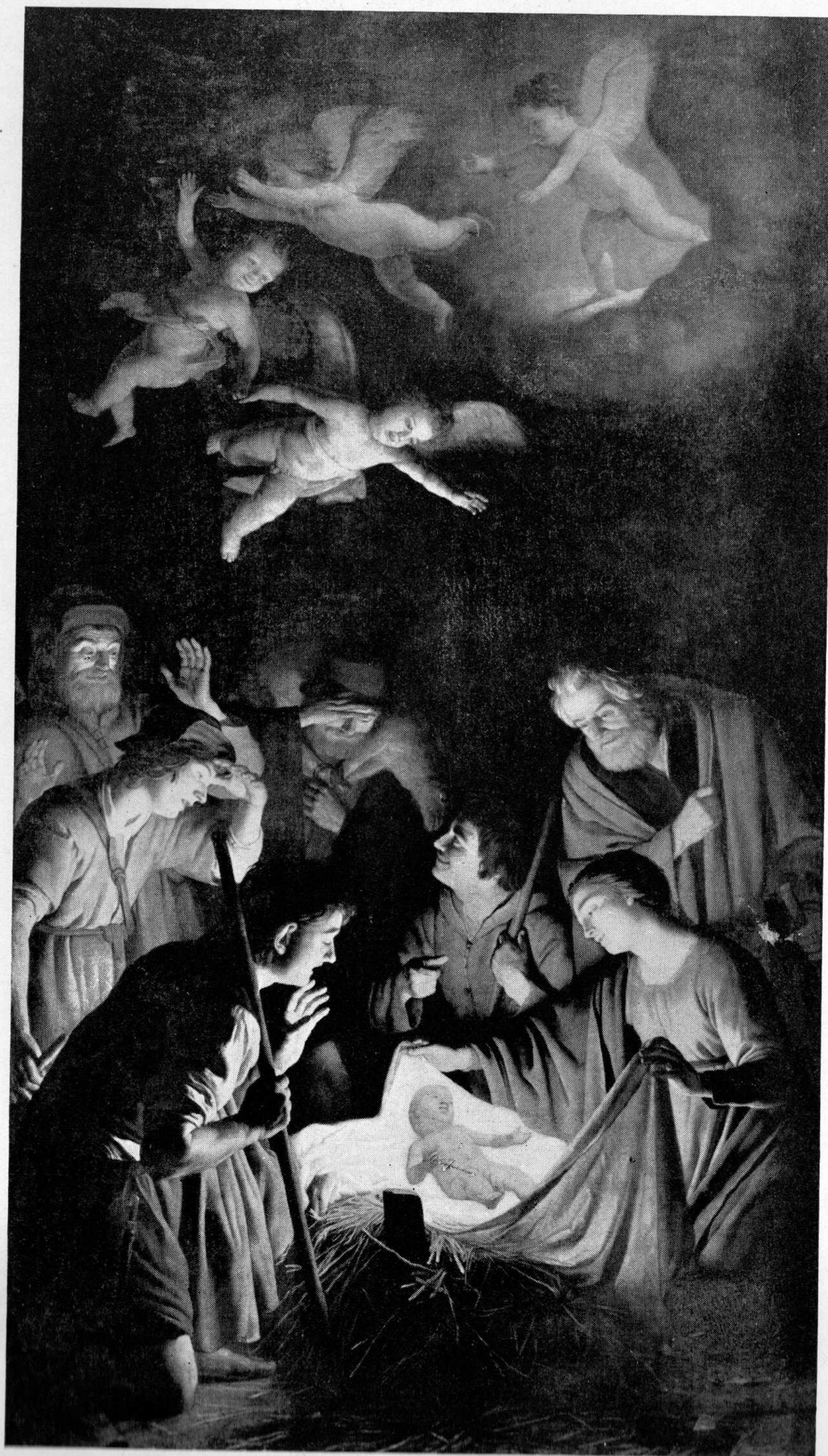




Uffizi Gallery, Florence.]

[Gherardo delle Notti,
THE ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS.



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Miscellanea.

THE pleasant duty devolves upon us in this number of THE CROSS of wishing our readers a very happy Christmas. To one and all of those our good friends may the great festival bring its gifts abundantly.

Never indeed was the state of Europe in stronger contrast with the spirit of Christmas. The civilisation that was born of the learning and holiness of the middle ages has been steadily decaying since Martin Luther nailed his theses—standard of revolt—to the chapel door of Wittenberg Castle: and now darkness has settled over the world, for whose lifting we look and pray, so far in vain. This year, alas! the Prince of Peace must come into a world rent by war.

Even before the horror of this war arose much of the old Christmas was gone. The merry-making and festivity of our forefathers, boisterous and silly as they sometimes were, deserve regret, for they brought some touch of joy into the dull world. Winter itself seems now reluctant to clothe road and tree and field with the white snow for Christmas as it did

of yore. Where now is the long silence of the dark night broken by the "Waits," music often of the simplest, yet welcome as heralds of Christmas? Where now is the chatter of the fireside hushed by the sound of sweet voices of children singing the time-honoured carol? Where now will faithful feet press the crisp snow as they pass from midnight cold and darkness through their church-porch to the warm glories of the midnight solemn Mass? Yet many things survive. The red berries are on the holly, and the haws in the hedge, and the mistletoe is green in the apple-orchards. The old folk in cottages on lone countrysides will put the lighted candle in the window in sign of love bravely travelling back through the centuries, a sign that here would have been hospitality for them that found no room in the Inn at Bethlehem. The young folk will go out at night to look for the new star that comes to guide the strangers from far off countries to the royal cradle of the King of the Jews. On St. Stephen's day the wren will hop and dive from branch to branch the whole hedge-row along, its little heart beating, for dear life!

* * * * *

A better thing, however, remains and always will remain—the festival itself. Easter is the foundation of our Faith. Pentecost is the impress of God's strength on the world. But Christmas appeals to our heart, compelling by its tenderness the surrender of our love. God becoming man is the theme of the theologian; God a newly-born infant is the wonder of the world. In the long gallery of God's works, Bethlehem is the picture that has arrested the crowd. The sight of a newly-born Babe who is still the eternal God, with the mother who is maid bending over Him—this is the strongest and tenderest of the "cords of Adam" that brings man's heart to God. With the countless multitude who have gone before us we repeat the words of the shepherds: "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this word which is come to pass," and following in their wake we also shall find "Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in the manger."

* * * * *

It was surely a prompting worthy of early piety to celebrate this mystery by the threefold offering of the most Holy Sacrifice. The custom started in Rome in the fourth century; spread through the vast Empire of Charlemagne in the ninth, and thence to these islands. History tells us how it came about, but spiritual writers find in the fact a high significance. With some it is a reminder that the Son of God was born into the world to save all mankind; those who lived under the natural law and primitive revelation, those who lived under the Mosaic law with its grander revelation of the sovereignty of God, and those who live under the law of love taught from the Manger to the Cross. With others it is a reminder of the threefold birth of Christ, Son of the Father in eternity and

truly God, Son of Mary in time and truly Man, and His spiritual birth by grace and love in our soul.

* * * * *

Then Christmas will hear again the sacred chants dear to us from childhood. The High Mass, stateliest of earth's ceremonies, conveying while veiling the tenderest of Heaven's mysteries, would be strangely wanting if we did not listen again to the sweet strains of the "Adeste Fideles." Though no part of the liturgy and young in the service of the Church, dating only from the seventeenth century, to us it has such force of long custom that the happy morn would not be true Christmas if our Mass were shorn of it. The "Alma Redemptoris Mater," that glorious lyric of maiden-motherhood heard from Advent to the Purification, holds in its words and melody all Christmas-time, as a rich setting holds a jewel. When Hermann Contractus, Benedictine monk and poet, composed it in the eleventh century, how little could he have known the full richness of the gift he was bestowing, an added joy to our Christmas.

* * * * *

Nor would Christmas be Christmas without our visit to the Crib. Realism is an instinct of our nature. The eye readily takes in the picture that many words would slowly draw. If we cannot share in the joy and merit of the shepherds summoned by angels to look upon the reality, we can fix our gaze upon its representation and thus learn some of the wonderful things of this mystery of love. There was devotion to that first resting-place of our Saviour on earth, the manger, from the time of St. Helena, who converted the grotto of the Nativity into a chapel, which was afterwards enclosed in the stately basilica built by her son, Constantine the Great. When the relic of the Crib, or probably of its supports (five pieces of sycamore wood) were, for safety's sake, brought to Rome in the pontificate of Pope Theodore (640-649), the basilica that received them was named Sancta Maria ad Præsepe (St. Mary of the Crib), and here the relic is solemnly exposed for the veneration of the people each year on Christmas Eve. But it is to that dear friend of the poor and lowly, St. Francis of Assisi, that we owe the "Crib" as we understand it. Having conceived the idea of making a scenic representation of the place of the Nativity, he laid his plan before Pope Honorius III, who gladly gave his sanction. He therefore, at Græci, on Christmas Eve, 1223, constructed a "crib," grouping round it figures of our Lady and St. Joseph, the ox and the ass, and the adoring shepherds. The legend tells us that acting as deacon at the midnight Mass, when he had sung the words of the Gospel, "and they laid Him in a manger," he knelt down to meditate awhile, and there appeared in his arms a child surrounded by a brilliant light.

Gentle reader, old or young, boy or maiden, when you are kneeling at the Crib, for you no child will appear in heavenly light, but a little child who is God, now lying in the straw, will knock at the door of your heart. Open it, and give Him a home there : then indeed you will have "a happy Christmas."

THE recent meeting in the Mansion House in support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society revealed the great and noble work that is done by this efficient charitable organisation. There are 61 conferences in Dublin, comprising 800 members, and during 1916 the Brothers of the Society paid 49,186 visits to 7,771 families. The Society maintains an Orphanage, where 150 boys are educated and provided for; a Night Shelter, a Seamen's Institute, and a Prisoners' Aid Society. His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Walsh, Archbishop of Dublin, showed his practical appreciation of the Society by contributing £100 to the funds. The Society well deserves the generous support of the charitably disposed, and we sincerely hope that the self-sacrificing work of the Brothers—who are Good Samaritans towards the needy and poor—may not be hampered by lack of funds.

A CORRESPONDENT has favoured us with a copy of the brochure, issued by the Catholic Young Men's Society of Cork, containing the programme of the Literary and Musical Session, as well as other interesting information regarding the Society.

During the session, which extends to the end of March, 1917, weekly reunions will be held at which lectures will be delivered and musical entertainments provided. Judging by the list of eminent lecturers, who will deliver addresses on various subjects, the session promises to be a particularly interesting and useful one. The Literary and Debating Guild, we are pleased to observe, have taken up the question of Social Science, and papers will be read on the housing question, which demands immediate attention in this country. It is a pity, indeed, that our municipal authorities did not make greater efforts in the past to grapple in a practical manner with the housing of the poor. Ireland does not stand alone in this regard. The deplorable condition under which a large number of the poor and working classes are housed in England and Scotland, as our experience as well as official reports testify, is a crying evil. There is no man more deserving of a comfortable home than the toiler who contributes so much towards building up the prosperity of the country, and in justice he should be provided with it. In giving an impetus to the movement for the better housing of the industrial classes, the members of the Cork Young Men's Society are showing praiseworthy alertness in one of the most pressing questions

that affects the well-being of what we consider the most deserving class in the community.

IN this number of THE CROSS we publish a beautiful and pathetic poem by the late Francis Ledwidge. The death of this gifted son of Ireland at the early age of 25 caused universal sorrow, for his genius was undoubted, and he was recognised as Nature's poet—"He lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." What was better still, he was a fervent and devoted Catholic, and the saying that "as a man lives so shall he die" was verified in him. It will be a consolation to all who admired him to read the subjoined letter which Father Devas, S.J., wrote to the poet's mother:—"I do not know how to write to you about the death of your dear son Francis. Quite apart from his wonderful gifts, he was such a lovable boy, and I was so fond of him. We had many talks together, and he used to read me his poems. He died on the feast of St. Ignatius Loyola. The evening before he had been to Confession: on the morning of 31st July he was present at Mass and received Holy Communion. That evening, while out with a working party, a shell exploded quite near to them, killing seven and wounding twelve. Francis was killed at once, so that he suffered no pain. I like to think that God took him before the world had been able to spoil him with its praise, and he has found far greater joy and beauty than ever he would have found on earth."

When Sweet the Blackbird Sings.

Think of me when the dear blackbird
Blows sweet music through the rain;
Just one thought, one little word,
But of a joyful memory stirred,
Till I come home again.

But should I come no more to where
The little river garden springs,
My name is carven often there—
Look for it on the gnarly pear,
When sweet the blackbird sings.

Always I came when you did call,
My country, and I come again;
And this I ask—and this is all—
My songs remember, should I fall,
When blackbirds welcome rain.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE.

St. Stephen : Proto-Martyr.

SCRIPTURAL biographies are confessedly fragmentary. The Sacred writers, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, set out to develop each man his own particular thesis, and, occupied with the development of this main idea, all matter irrelevant to the issue was excluded. Thus information which we would regard as of inestimable value towards the reconstruction of the most interesting and important epoch of Christianity—the first century—was silently rejected.

Hence we are allowed to catch but a fleeting glimpse of the figure of St. Stephen who, in the light of our present knowledge, must have played an important rôle in the history of the Primitive Church.

In the sixth chapter of the Acts we are introduced to a group of ecclesiastical officials—the Seven Deacons of Jerusalem. Their names are enumerated and pride of place is assigned to Stephen, who as the first martyr for the Faith, and the first churchman to see in its true perspective the universalistic teaching of Christ, claims more than a passing mention. Yet the sacred writer does not delay over questions of genealogy, nationality or education in his presentment of this striking and arresting personality. We are not told explicitly—although we must perforce infer—that this “burning and shining light” of the infant Church was a Greek-speaking Jew versed in all the learning of the age and particularly in the art of rhetoric. But of his place of birth, parentage or age at the time of his appearance in the narrative—not a word! St. Luke relates how the Christians of Jerusalem were scattered over all Judea by a persecution set in motion by the death of Stephen: showing clearly that the event was related only as being inextricably linked with a stage distinct and definite in the progress of the Church.

However, we may by a careful reconstruction of the two scenes preserved for us by St. Luke, arrive at a just, though wholly inadequate, appreciation of Stephen's life and life-work.

In the first scene the theatre of action is the synagogue or synagogues (the text does not clearly indicate which) of certain Greek-speaking Jews born in exile who had come to spend their declining years within the shadow of the Temple.

Now of these there arose certain of them disputing with Stephen. The matter in dispute is not explicitly mentioned, but from the fact that the impetuous deacon was subsequently arraigned on the charge of having spoken “blasphemous words against Moses and God” (or in the concrete against the Law and the Temple) we may infer that Stephen had already propounded the theories which were later pushed to their ulti-

mate logical conclusions by Paul, viz., that the Law and the Temple were not permanent and indispensable.

And therein precisely do we discern the true greatness and insight of Saint Stephen: for with his mind broadened by contact with pagan wisdom he was the first to realise that unless it were immediately proclaimed from the housetops that the Christian Church was not subordinate to Judaism, it might sink to the level of a slightly differentiated synagogue.

This constitutes his peculiar claim to attention in any study of the progress of Primitive Christianity.

Ardent, skilled in speech and bold in argument, he attracted first attention and then opposition. But neither dialectics or sophistry could avail aught against his fiery inspired eloquence. His opponents were simply unable “to withstand the wisdom and spirit with which he spoke.”

Beaten in words, refuted in argument, they had recourse to fraud and force. They first suborn witnesses to pervert his words and accuse him of blasphemy, then the scene is abruptly changed as they hurry him in summary fashion into the presence of the Sanhedrin.

Before this supreme Jewish tribunal he was indicted on the count of having spoken blasphemy against Moses and God, or rather against their respective personifications (to Jewish minds)—the Law and the Temple. The audience hung with bated breath on the lips of the perjured and foresworn witnesses as they presented that distorted half-truth which is ever the worst of lies, and then all eyes sought the face of the accused.

Christian tradition has represented Stephen as youthful, handsome and prepossessing, and it is certain that as he faced that hostile gaze, a supernatural beauty transformed his countenance and the light of sacrifice freely sought and as freely accepted shone in his eyes. “They saw his face as the face of an angel” is the terse but expressive word-picture of the author of the Acts. But the lust of blood was in their hearts, and all other considerations remorselessly stifled as the high-priest put the formal question:

“Are these things so?”

The answer was given in a speech calmly dignified and subtly argumentative. No direct denial of the charge does he make, and yet he speaks with such national pride of the Temple, he dwells with such undisguised enthusiasm on the life-story of Moses, as to convincingly insinuate his loyalty to both. But meanwhile whither tends the drift of his argument? This same Temple and this same Law which his audience fondly imagined were permanent, immutable and indispensable, are really temporary, transitory and conditional. Centuries before stone was laid on stone in the vast imposing edifice reared by Solomon for the worship of Jahveh, religious intercourse pure and strong had been carried on between the patriarchs and the Most High; years before the national hero

Moses had proclaimed the ordinances of the Law, ceremonial observances had been practised. What then of the vaunted immortality and necessity of either the one or the other institution?

Towards the end of the speech there is such an abrupt transition from studied conciliation to scathing invective, that we must postulate a more violent interruption which snapped the last thread of his already sorely-tried patience, and to which he flung back the cutting rebuke:

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised of heart. . . You do always resist the Holy Ghost. . . You who received the law ordained by angels and kept it not."

This was the last drop in the already overflowing cup of his defiance of that august assembly, and in their ungovernable fury they gnashed their teeth at him. He heeded them not, and as if to shut out the sight of their degrading exhibition of rage and malice, he raised his eyes to Heaven. And his soul, soaring aloft, was favoured with a fleeting vision of celestial things, so that, forgetful of all else, he cried aloud:

"Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!"

Whether he remembered that Christ had been wont to so designate Himself or whether the Spirit warned him to use this appellation as a significant reminiscence of the speech of the Master before this same assembly and in similar circumstances, we know not; but certain it is that nowhere else in the whole range of the literature of the New Testament do we find the title "Son of Man" attributed to Christ by lips other than His own.

The significance of all this, however, troubled his accusers not at all. To their sacrosanct ears the exclamation was a blasphemy. Throwing to the winds all pretence of legal formality and carefully-weighed decision, they rushed upon Stephen and bore him out of the city gates to be stoned.

Hence about the year 37 Stephen sealed his Faith with his blood, and in the terse but vividly expressive language of St. Luke "Fell asleep."

His life and death marked a turning-point in the history of the Church, and gave it a progressive impetus, which only needed the guiding hand of that same Paul, at whose feet the Jewish fanatics who stoned Stephen laid their garments, to develop it into what its Founder intended it to be—the Church of the Gentiles and of the World.

P. J. VESEY, B.A., B.C.L.

Christmas Customs and Legends in Various Lands.

THE original "halcyon days" were at Christmas, and so called because the kingfisher was said to build its nest upon the waters at this time of year. It was generally supposed that this bird, through the influence of the Holy Season, had the power to still the waves and winds, so that the weather was peaceful and calm, and enable the kingfisher to lay her eggs in her floating nest and brood upon them in perfect safety.

In olden times it was believed that Nature testified in various ways to recognise the great event commemorated in the celebration of Christmas. The winds and seas, as well as the animals, plants and all living things, gave evidence of knowledge of the approaching glorious anniversary, and became imbued with the prevalent spirit of adoration, joy and peace.

Tradition tells us that at the moment of the Saviour's birth a universal peace reigned throughout the earth, that a deep silence rested upon the world, the birds stopped in their flights, the cattle ceased to feed, men became motionless with sudden awe in the midst of their labours, and the stars glittered with added lustre.

A pretty legend comes to us about the first Christmas tree. When Ansagarius preached the "White Christ" to the Vikings of the North, the Lord sent His three messengers, Faith, Hope and Love, to help to find the first tree. They were to seek one that should be high as hope, as wide as love, and that bore the sign of the Cross on every bough; so they chose the balsam-fir, as it met their requirements better than any other tree in the forests.

The Christmas candle is lighted in France, and indeed in all Catholic countries, where, it is said, the Christ Child, the Blessed Virgin, and the Angels pass through the land on Christmas Eve, when everyone is asleep, so the tall candles are set in the windows, and remain burning all night. Tables are set, bright fires left in the stoves, so that the Heavenly guests may find food, rest and warmth.

In Italy the sun shines brightly, although the air is often cold, and in the towns the shivering people can be seen crouching over braziers filled with burning charcoal in alleys and corners. Booths are set up in the streets, where toys, sweets, etc., may be purchased, and picturesquely dressed beggars ask for alms.

Everyone goes to see the "Bambino" in the churches; it

is practically the same as the Holy Babe in our "Cribs." Children are given "Bambinos," the figure of the Blessed Infant being made of chocolate, marzipan, papier-mache, wax, china or metal, just as in Belgium, Holland and Germany, figures of Santa Claus or St. Nicholas are made of various materials.

Italian children believe that their Christmas boxes are brought by "Befana," an old woman who is said to go her rounds on the Eve of the Epiphany—some say the name is a corruption of "Epiphania." Strange figures of her are carried about; she holds a big broom, for she was supposed to be sweeping busily when the Wise Men came to Bethlehem, and would not put aside her work to see them, saying that she would see them on their return. But, as they were warned in a dream of Herod's plot to murder Christ, they went home another way; and unhappy Befana waits with her broom on Twelfth Eve, hoping to see them. In some places Befana, like Santa Claus, comes down the chimney with gifts for good children, while other folks say the walls turn into cream cheese at midnight to allow her to pass with her train of mules, laden with presents!

In the valleys of Piedmont a curious "Pastorel," or miracle play, is performed in the churches at Christmas, when the "Creche" is erected by a side altar, and the persons who take part in the play bring offerings to the Holy Babe. They represent eleven shepherds and from one to three angels. As soon as midnight Mass has advanced as far as the Creed, the priest warns the people to be attentive, as they are about to see a wonderful sight. A knocking is heard at the chief door of the church, which is opened by a priest, and the shepherds enter, carrying such offerings as a lamb, a pair of pigeons, butter, honey, fruit, eggs and cloth, supposed to be for the Infant's swaddling clothes. The shepherds wear long white cloaks, broad-brimmed hats, and carry sticks. If they can obtain nothing else the poor men bring a kid, a hare, the skin of some wild animal, or even a few flowers. Each one in his humble way presents his offering at the "Creche," saying that he dedicates himself as well as his poor present to the Christ Child. Before this the Angel, who has led them to the crib, gives a sort of sermon on the Christian faith, and, after the offerings are made, the chief shepherd, "Montano," says they will go out and spread the good news of the Nativity to the world. Then the priest finishes Mass, the congregation join in a carol before they light their torches, which have been left outside the church, and go home in the starlight.

In the good old times the Irish chieftains kept open house during the "Twelve Days," for in this country all the Yuletide merry-making came to an end on "Nodlag Beg," or "Little Christmas Day," though in England they were often kept up till Candlemas, and sometimes till Shrovetide.

In country houses ready hospitality was offered at this season to poor relations, and indeed to anyone in need. The castle and "big house" were gaily decorated, waits, carol singers and mummers flocked into them, and were as welcome in those days in the houses of the Irish gentry as the wandering piper or fiddler is still in the farmhouse and the cottage.

One of the most beautiful Yuletide legends concerns that exquisite flower the Christmas rose. As the Wise Men came with their precious gifts for the Blessed Babe, a poor little girl stood outside the stable, crying bitterly because she had nothing to offer. Suddenly an angel appeared and bade her brush away the snow, which she did; and behold! at her feet grew a cluster of beautiful, pure white flowers. These she quickly gathered; and, having thanked the angel, she laid them before the manger where the Holy Child lay. And ever since the fair, white blossoms flourish even though the ground is covered with snow.

The robin is always called the Christmas bird, and so I must repeat the sweet little story about it. Once the robin was plain brown, but it followed Our Saviour to the Cross trying to draw the thorns from His brow, so that its breast was stained with the Sacred Blood, which dyed it crimson; and ever since the bird is marked with this colour, so that all may know it is holy and that ill-luck will befall those who injure it. An Irish legend also asserts that robins tried to hide the Holy Child with moss, so as to conceal Him from Herod's messengers, and were blessed in consequence.

NELLIE M. SARGENT.

In the Days of the Wild Geese.

A Tale of Sarsfield's Times.

By GREGORY BARR (Author of "Retribution," &c.).

CHAPTER IV.

FALL OF CASTLE MOR.

"**H**ERE, first drink this goblet of wine and then listen to my proposal," said the Colonel.

The wine being disposed of, he commenced:

"They seem to me to have but one piece of ordnance: as a first-class strategist, which our opponent undoubtedly is, he would certainly place it so as to command the weakest spot. Let us aim there and nowhere else."

"Granted; yet you know well that no man can live one

moment within range of that accursed piece of artillery; they are secure behind their walls, whereas our men are exposed."

"You have two hundred men in reserve; let them spend to-morrow felling trees to form a rampart, behind which our lads can fire in safety. Let them take a good rest to-morrow: lull the enemy to security by a partial withdrawal—then, during the night, build your rampart, fix your two guns, and blaze away at the Castle the next day. I bet you a dozen old port it will be ours before night."

This fatal advice was carried out.

When The O'Driscoll saw the rampart erected opposite the Castle he knew the end had come. He assembled his family and his little garrison. He ordered his wife, his two youngest sons, the women, the children and the wounded to take refuge at once in the vaults: the entrance to these was so skilfully concealed as to baffle detection. A tunnel extending a long distance led from the vaults to a cavern, the opening of which was hidden under a mass of underwood. Besides The O'Driscoll family only one man knew the secret of entrance and exit to this place of concealment, and that man was Darby Finerty. To him The O'Driscoll confided his most precious treasures—his wife, his children, the wounded clansmen and the women and children, commanding all to obey Darby as they would obey himself. Loud lamentations arose from the women and children, but O'Driscoll stopped this with a few grave words.

His wife said: "I promise that we shall all obey you absolutely."

He signified his thanks by a look and said: "My friends, all are at liberty to seek their safety now; let no one stay back to follow a forlorn hope with me and my sons unless he is prepared and willing to meet his God before night. We will sell our lives dearly; but, labour under no delusion—our fight is to the death."

Not alone did all who were unwounded choose to remain with him—even the wounded implored to be allowed to help. This he would not allow. He made a sign to his wife, who, feigning calmness whilst her heart was breaking, bade Darby lead them to the vaults.

Conor O'Driscoll ascended to the roof of the Castle, whence he sent up three rockets, the signal to Sir Fergus MacVeagh that the end was near.

"Saw you that?" asked Major Krag of the Colonel. "What devilment was that?"

"Probably asking help from some of the Irishry around. Never fear, though, we'll quickly smoke out this nest of hornets."

A truce to your boasting, gentlemen! When you shall have battered down the entrance and rushed in, sword in hand; when over a hundred of your followers, with their Colonel,

shall have fallen—slain by this handful of brave Irish, fighting for hearth and home—then, and not till then may you exult!

At length the massive door gave way. Bravely fought the heroic father and his five sons, dealing death all round. Over and over again did the assailants fall back, until at last numbers prevailed and each gallant clansman fell—sword in hand.

Maddened by the prolonged resistance, the assailants rushed through the Castle, determined to put to death women, children, and not to spare the wife of its brave defender.

In vain did they seek their prey—in vain did they sound wall and pavement to find a clue to the channel of escape.

Finally, Major Krag concluded that all save the defenders must have left it before the siege, and he gave over the search.

When Madame O'Driscoll found herself in the vaults, surrounded by her poor dependants, she suggested that they should all say the Rosary for those who fought in defence of their homes. The rise and fall of the Aves soothed the stricken people.

When the boom of artillery had ceased, the prayer was continued in tones scarcely audible, so that no sound could reach the ears of the enemy.

At nightfall Darby entered the tunnel to see that all was in readiness for the flight of his mistress. About midnight he conducted her and her two sons through the tunnel, having first fastened securely the entrance from it to the vaults. In the latter place there was an abundance of provisions for the other refugees, and Darby promised them that as soon as it was possible he would come for them.

At the outlet of the tunnel they found Sir Fergus MacVeagh waiting for them.

At first he could not speak, but kissed the hand of Madame in silence; he knew well that her husband and her five sons had been slain, and deep was his sympathy for her grief. She was the first to speak.

"Accept the thanks of a heart-broken woman, who would welcome death but for those —"

"Who are now as my own children," interrupted Sir Fergus. "But, Lady, you must hasten to a secure hiding-place. Were you to come to my home I could not answer for your safety. Every house in the neighbourhood will be searched. I have found a safe refuge for you and your boys. Near the summit of Mangerton, above the 'Devil's Punch-Bowl,' there is a little cottage surrounded by densely wooded heights and hidden by a mass of creepers. I and my faithful servant, Murtagh, have provided it with such comfort in haste as we could obtain. The water of the little lake is ice-cold even in this sultry weather. Murtagh will conduct you thither in all haste."

Sir Fergus gave a signal like the hooting of a night-owl, and

a man leading several mules emerged from the wood.

"As soon as Murtagh returns I shall hasten to the Prince of Orange to try to secure your children's inheritance."

Madame O'Driscoll tried to thank him but emotion choked her voice.

Though the little party made all haste, several hours elapsed before they reached the poor cottage that was to be their temporary home.

The boys climbed the cliffs nimbly; their mother had to be lifted over them by Darby and Murtagh.

When the little bourne was reached her self-control gave way and her pent-up grief found vent in an agony of tears. The two men withdrew to leave her alone with her sorrow-stricken children.

Though every effort had been made by her kind protector to soften her hard lot, nothing could be provided save bare necessities.

Quickly controlling herself, she sent for Murtagh, thanked him and bade him bring her heartfelt thanks to his master. She handed him some pieces of gold, but he would not touch them, declaring that the highest honour an Irishman could covet was to be able to serve the family of one of their Chieftains.

After his departure she set to work to put her little dwelling in order. Then with her two sons she went to survey her position. The cottage was absolutely screened from all but the keenest observation, so she and hers felt that here they were safe.

The panorama spread before them was entrancing in its beauty: the three lakes were distinctly visible—the Muckcross, or Middle Lake, with the beautiful islands of Dinis and Brickeen, lay beneath them. Through the old Weir Bridge could be seen Lough Leane, playfully mingling its waters with its neighbours through the narrow channel. Then the smallest of all, the Upper Lake, seemed almost the most beautiful, studded with twelve verdant islets and guarded by majestic mountains, the MacGillycuddy's Reeks, the peaks of which were touched with rose and gold by the rising sun. The exquisite scene only renewed the grief of the lonely widow, who had last witnessed it in company with him who was now no more.

(To be continued.)

Lovable People.

A PART from all the causes and sources of love engendered by a person, there is something quite, *per se*, in being lovable—something not met with at every by-street or lane-turning—not living in every cottage or flat.

There is some quality or some distinguishing mark in a lovable personality—like a certain, evanescent light behind one cloud makes it lovely beyond compare with the multitudinous other clouds coursing across the sky—some exquisite colour, a palest shading brings it to our sight as peerless and perfect, lifting our thoughts where the others only please the eye. You gaze up and around and each object arrests in turn, but always the glance returns to the one cloud singled out by you till you feel that if, like Rip Van Winkle, you slept a hundred years, on awakening you would brush the white hair from your eyes and remember the cloud you love to see.

So it is, in the country, away in the fields; there is a certain spot you love above all, and always stand and review it from the angle you like best; no matter how often you pass that way something taps at your heart and you wait to drink in the beauty of the wee spot once more. May be you know every inch of it, the green, the blossom, the stile, the little broken step in the hedge, the long daisies and the black cow—and yet every time something new comes out and the picture is locked up again. There you have pitched your tent, and you feel you are welcome whenever you stay. You may have been to many a land, but that one little corner you always visit and "stand and stare!" I am so fond of those verses of W. B. Davies, on "Leisure," yearning to "stand and stare."

So it is with personalities, certain ones appear with the unmistakable drawing-power of a strength all their own, and win by the very spring of their fibre.

To be lovable is a quality, so exquisite as to comprise all that one could imagine to admire. It is a perfume permeating the whole character—first of all, it is an essence from God—for a lovable person is full of grace—and so full of beauty. This is the foundation, but the human side of lovable persons is distinctive; they are full of feeling and loving outstretched arms, full of beautiful thoughts for others, full of little everyday sweetnesses—unexpected sympathies, and that disregard of any self-sufficing rules of society and entire freedom from the snobbish grooves of earth-bound atmosphere. Lovable means so much that it is untranslatable—there is something innate and yet evanescent when analysed.

We all know how fatal it is to *think*, really ponder over the fact, that we are happy, no matter how really jubilant we

feel, once begin to analyse and see wherein our state of happiness consists, the inevitable result is the discovery of a defect in that state.

Happiness may not be dissected, for it is something spiritual and fades away when pursued. So, with a lovable person you know what it is draws you, but it is undefinable. Still I think all will agree that the prevailing magnetic quality is unselfishness and that giving *out* of oneself to others, and that fear of hurting anyone, this latter quality is so precious that we seem to hug it when we do meet it. And there is a pathos, winning in the extreme, in the delicate fear of wounding. Lovableness in children is absolutely distinct from a fascination or admiration. A lovable child may be absolutely without surface beauty, but the charm lies entirely outside. May be it is a self-willed plain little mortal, with apparently no redeeming quality, but irresistibly attractive to those who know her. Children who lean, little children who stand outside the radius of the noisy, apart in quiet little corners of the garden, little children who come sidling up to you on the stairs, little creatures who love to be one of you, not to find you playing down to them, little mortals whose personalities are their own in as entire a way as yours or mine, the little people who go a long way to influence the world through their magnetic power with the elders. They are like the little sweet-smelling flowers, beautiful and pure. The dependence of the wee babies is endearing, but lovableness is distinct from that, for to be lovable necessitates giving out something. Personalities like Charles Lamb, Mr. Main, Dr. Whitty, are all lovable in their different ways. Lovableness shrouds round weaknesses, faults and failings, and like the lovely wings of the butterfly, it makes one forget the chrysalis.

What a world it would be without lovableness, hard, cruel, dark, and drear, for it is lovableness, which wraps round the unendurable roughness, fills up the hidden holes of danger and, besides this, acts as a beckoning influence up the steeps which Rossetti so pleadingly visions for us.

"Oh! what is this that knows the road I came,
The flame turned cloud, the cloud returned to flame.
The lifted shifted steeps and all the way?"

Whilst it is rare and so more precious, yet its very rareness makes its presence more pervading, more saturating, more mourned when departed from our ken. Like the swallows when they leave for winter, we scan the horizon for their return. We love a lovable person with surpassing power, we keep them within our soul's portals, and when we realise their individual life, we can do naught but wait for their return.

Who does not know the precious possession in our midst of a lovable man or woman? May be they are quite unconscious of that quality in themselves. Daily we meet them and hourly

speak with them and yet, as Fr. Vincent McNabb says of our best thoughts, "You had better not analyse them, because it would be simply vivisectioning them."

Lovableness can exist, with many faults, many weaknesses and therein lies the human beauty.

When the absolutely correct, faultless person is shunned and passed by like a cold douche, the cross little baby, the generous, gentle spendthrift, the peppery, but lovable kinsman whom we have taken to our hearts, the absent-minded student, the selfish, but winning schoolboy, all lovable by very reason of their drawbacks. Charles Lamb and Mr. Main were far from perfection, and yet, where our hearts would be cold at the approach of an Addison or Chesterfield, these would find their way to our arms.

Do you remember the exquisite drawing of poor Mr. Main, toiling home after the loss of his berth at Messrs. Marten and Cabell. He was going on, against the heat of London pavements, the thought of his fruitless journeys in local trains (third-class to save the difference), of carrying small tins of cocoa in a black bag, of ingratiating himself with grocers and provision dealers in arrogant country towns—all this for three months, and then, the firm had given him his congé. "Then—at the end of the month, Mr. Main . . ."

The little touch of what he expected to find at home is so Bensonian in its complete comprehension. "He would be there in a quarter of an hour—Marian, if she had awakened from her afternoon nap, or if she were not too much engrossed in proof-correcting, might perhaps be getting tea ready. Or she might not, one could never tell. At any rate there would be Marian."

Of course you know he had given up all which he called nothing to be a Catholic.

One has only to turn to Percy and the finale of his entry into the sweets of this world, renouncing *Everything* which is worth anything. Read the little summary, he gave up Christ for prudence.

"A reasonable, prudent, sensible young man, and the son-in-law of a peer.

"And here was Mabel, delicious. . . . She looked simply sweet."

One loves Mr. Main very dearly, and rejoices that Percy was kept out of the fold by the author; he was not worthy. I remember telling Mgr. Benson how glad I was he kept Percy out of the Church, and took in that poor little (great) Curate and he said, "Oh! I am glad you think so. A lady has blamed me very much about Percy."

Lovableness is a quality of beauty, sweetness and gentleness, but it must have grit and worth. An emasculated, weak appeal to our sympathy and pity, our love and our esteem goes unheard. Faith listens, but the grounds for faith must be there—no one is so lovable as the man or woman whose soul

and heart are stripped and bare of this world's silly grills and fences, whose prudence is not always on sentinel duty; but above all has some inexpressibly winning power of arrest and appeal, by very reason of their love of our limitations, like Emerson's "Systole and diastole of the heart." There is another line of this whit-thoughted man—"The great man knew not he was great. It comprises all."

EDITH PEARSON.

The Two who Came.

Into the streets of Bethlehem,
With dusk and gleam upon the snow,
They came. There was no room for them
In the inn. There was no hearth's glow
To welcome Her of highest grace
In all that royal city-place.

So they passed outward through the gate . . .
(Bravely the little donkey trod
Unto the white hills). And elate
Sat Mary, in commune with God.
And over clefts and the snow's soft wave
They came at last unto a cave.

Behold Saint Joseph in the gloom
Labour to make it meet abode
For his Bless'd Spouse! (And there is room
E'en for the donkey which she rode.)
Night deepeneth. The world is dumb . . .
Christ's natal hour is almost come. . . .

P. J. O'CONNOR DUFFY.

Christopher.

A LITTLE herd stood in the haggard below the house, watching the fume of vapour sweep along the hills, now dragging low with sharp flow of rain upon the valley, now lifting up with travelling sunburst, to strike sudden colour upon the stony fields.

His mouth shook faintly, his eyes were troubled; it was his birthday—the feast of Christopher—but there had been nothing to set it apart from all other days of the year.

He had risen early to set off into Glenbeigh, to get Mass and Communion, to do honour to his patron; he had made the distance between running and walking, to reach chapel out of breath, and late. He knelt by the altar rails, the heart hammering in his throat from excitement and exertion, hoping that Father Scollard—who was about the last prayers—might see him, to give him Communion; but old Father Scollard, being both deaf and blind, shuffled into the sacristy. Christopher had not courage to follow him, so walked his road home, uncomfited. He found the handful of breakfast finished; his father scolded him, asking was not Sunday's Mass enough for him. He had gone into Killorglin to the fair, bidding the boy to tend the brood of young turkeys now rising, and to herd the cattle at dusk. Christopher followed the fowl into the haggard, his eyes on the distance, as sad eyes so often will be.

Then there was no boy to have game with: the holding stood highest in the valley, by the three lakes, whose streams bred the river which crossed the road by a ford above Christopher's house. Six or eight great, flat-topped stones carried the foot-passenger over-stream, the carters driving through the shallow. But to-day, what with the wet July, the fording-stones were covered, and what with the force of the current all but impassable; while as for the pool below, it had become a whirlpool, in which a horse might with difficulty keep his legs.

Aye, it was lonely here, with the mist and sun and crying curlew, among the brown bogs, with the white bog cotton dancing in the wind. Christopher came to wonder what his mother would have been; she had died in giving him birth, which had set the father's heart heavily against the boy. She would have understood, would have kept a bit of breakfast by for him, would have been now within, in the house, he running in and out to her for chat. In spite of himself, two great tears rose up in his two eyes and plumped upon the frieze jacket, that always smelt so of peat smoke.

He went to a quicken springing from the stone fence, broke

a branch and stripped the leaves. He guided the poult with the mother by a gap in the wall out to a little common, sprinkled up and down by a few whin bushes, bordered by the quick, brown, bubble-spotted water coming from the pool. The poult scattered about, calling low and soft as they picked. The herd went to the overhanging bank and sate down, swinging his heels; the grass grew sweeter hereabout, and he could watch the black cattle feeding farther by the hills. Suddenly a thought came to him; he got up on to his two knees, put his two hands together and said: "Oh, blessed Christopher, let you send me someone to make game with—for Christ's sake, Amen!"

He sate himself down again, with an eye on the cows.

He must have dozed awhile; he started up—for sure, somebody called him, in the high voice of a child. He looked around; there came a sudden sun-burst, beyond at the butt of the common, where the stream spread itself about the bog; in the light he saw a very little lad, with a very white shirt, corduroy breeches and bare legs. The child ran towards him, laughing with fun.

"Come and make play with me, Christopher!" he cried. "They told me above that you were lonely."

"Where are you from yourself?" said Christopher, "I don't rightly know your face."

"I stop up above," said the boy. "If you don't rightly know me, it's myself that well knows yourself. Let you come, there's a big trout in a hole under the bank below—we'll get him for sure."

The two padded down to where the force of the stream ran a bit spent; there in the bank was a hole right enough, but the trout was another matter. They lay side by side, at full stretch upon the edge, putting their small hands gently into the hole. Suddenly something shot between their fingers: it was the fish, away off into the bogs beyond. A great fellow of a dragon-fly came over in a snatch of sun; away with the pair of them among the whins, Christopher with his cap, the strange lad with but the two hands of him. In their excitement they tripped over one another, rolling on the short grass. They picked themselves up laughing, but the dragon-fly was gone.

"We'll go gather canaván," said the boy solemnly; "my mother she would like that well."

They moved down to the bog, pulling the white, dancing bog cotton as they went.

"It must be fine to have your mother with you," said Christopher, enviously.

"It is so," said the little lad. "And have you not got your own?"

"No, she's dead," said Chris, in a whisper.

"I'm sorry," said the child; "but let you not be fretting,

sure I'll bring you to my own above, and she'll be yours too."

"I do be alone, minding my father's cows," said Christopher mournfully. "They're rare contrary. What do you be at yourself?"

"It's my father's sheep I look after; they're headstrong, too—betimes," said the little lad. "But it's time I was getting back home, it is late."

"Which way will you take? You were saying you stopped up above—is it above the ford you mean? You'll find it hard for to cross."

"Aye, above the ford. My father's man carried me down; he'll not be passing the road again this evening; it's likely you'd carry me yourself?"

"Aye," said Christopher doubtfully, "but there's a great force of water by the stones. When will you come play with me again?"

"It's yourself will be coming to my own place," said the child; "it's great games we will have there."

They left the little common, driving the turkeys before them into the turf-roofed shelter within the yard. Christopher shut them in carefully. The two trotted down the bit of lane, out into the road. When they came to the ford there was a great foam of water coming between the stones, sure enough. He didn't half like crossing, leaving the house and cattle, let alone the danger. He looked wistfully at the little lad; he felt a great love for him, the little lad who wanted to bring his mother the bog cotton. Suddenly he knelt down: "Let you get up on to my back," he said.

He felt the small body pressed against his own, the warm breath about his neck, the two soft arms put about him. He gathered up the bare legs, putting his foot upon the first of the stones. The cold strength of the stream struck into him, but he stepped slow and steady from stone to stone, not looking aside at all at the rush, or giving heed to the great roar there was. He reached the other side, knelt again, and the child slipped down.

"Thank you, Christopher, for carrying me; let you kiss me now," he said.

Christopher knelt yet, so that his face was on a height with the boy's face; he put his own mouth to the moist, sweet mouth of the child; a strange shiver went through him.

"Good-bye," said he, and got up.

"Good-bye," said the little lad.

Christopher started back, going carefully as at first; when he was about the middle he heard his name cried again, from behind, not a child's voice this time, but a man's. It would be his father, mayhap, angry—or maybe drunk itself, after the fair. He turned round, startled. There was a man beyond, by the bank, where he had left the little boy; it wasn't his father, a man with a brown beard and a good face, the best face

for sure that he had ever seen. He smiled at Christopher, and called out: "Little one, who carried me but now, come to me, that I carry you to my mother!"

The herd looked at him—he could not take his eyes from his face. "Yes, yes!" he cried suddenly, "Let you wait, Man, I will go with you!"

It seemed the Man held out his two arms to him. He sprang forward, slipped, recovered himself, slipped again, and sank without a cry, with scarce a splash, into the deep, brown whirlpool below.

an púibín.

The Christmas Candle.

I.

ALL was silent in the houseplace of the farmstead save for the ticking of the eight-day clock on the wall. It seemed to beat with more solemn intensity as the evening advanced and every moment brought nearer the hour of Christ's mystic birth.

The peat fire casting a soft glow on the red-tiled floor and shining on the crockery on the dresser, only served to make the shadows more visible. Yet when the little widow, Eileen Shaw, the only occupant of the place, reached down one of the pair of solid brass candle-sticks from the chimney-piece, it was evidently not with the object of providing a better light for herself, for she carried it to the window, which was at a considerable distance from the hearth, and placed it on the wide ledge between some pots of hardy plants. Had she been placing a candle before some holy shrine she could not have performed the simple act in a more religious manner.

Although the Yorkshire moorland farm had been her home since her marriage, Eileen had been born and bred in Ireland, and the Faith she had brought with her had not only taken more steadfast root and grown the hardier by force of having to contend against the bleakness of the spiritual atmosphere, but had moreover continued to put forth blossoms of tender piety. The candle was for no other end than to shine a welcome to the Eternal Child on His entrance into a cold, dark-some world.

She recalled the time when Terence had first been old enough to light the Christmas candle, which he had done every Christmas since till this one, and how as a little lad he had peeped out between the curtains with eager expectancy. Something of the same expectancy possessed her now.

It was twenty years ago this very night since her little son had first lain in her arms and the joyful mystery of the Divine Maternity had lent some of its sacredness to the joy of her own motherhood.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for him now!"

In the midst of what unimaginable perils and hardships might not her boy be in at this very moment, and she sitting there in comfort and safety. It was this last consideration that was more than she could bear.

She rose abruptly and, turning away from the hearth, saw Terence himself standing on the threshold. Ghastly pale and hollow-eyed, with bandaged head and one arm hanging limply at his side, there he stood with the same old smile, she had hungered to see again, on his face.

She ran forward with a glad cry.

"Terence *avick*, 'tis the Blessed Mother herself has brought you!"

He was in her arms, and she was leading him to the broad settle at the side of the hearth, while a strange, sweet awe mingled with the suddenness of her joy.

"To think of your coming home on this blessed night of all the nights in the year, and I fancying you far away in outlandish parts!"

He had fallen back exhausted on the pillows she had made haste to bring, and she busied herself in setting meat and drink before him, speaking fond, endearing words the while, as to a child who must be reassured that his mother is near at hand.

Then she knelt down beside him, the better to minister to his wants. Seeing his gaze fixed on the thin, blue flame of the candle she had placed on the table, and thinking the light troubled him, she pushed it further behind her to shield it from his eyes, and taking up a cordial held it to his lips.

"There now, darling, just take a drop of this that you may get strength to eat. . . ."

There was no sign of any presence beyond her own. She was kneeling beside an empty settle speaking to empty air. The cup fell with a crash from her still uplifted hand.

An icy chill of fear seemed to freeze all the blood in her veins. For she knew it was Terence's wraith had visited her that night.

With trembling limbs she went again to the door and, opening it, stooped down and peered narrowly around her with the aid of a lanthorn. The snow lying shroudlike over the land had drifted close up against the sill, and there was no mark of any footfall to be seen. And overhead one star was shining like a Christmas candle set in God's window.

That same star was shining down on Terence, where he lay on what was no longer recognisable as the snow which had fallen some hours earlier.

He slowly opened his eyes and looked around him. He was

surely just awakening from some horrid nightmare of things he dreaded to re-shape in his memory. He wondered how he came to be lying out alone at night on the Derbyshire fells within sight of home, and on Christmas night too, for there was the Christmas candle shining in the window. He must be quick and rouse himself. His mother would be looking out for him and growing anxious at his delay. He attempted to rise, and fell back again with a groan. Pain racked him from head to foot and he found he was powerless to move his left arm. He bound up the wound as well as he could with his handkerchief and succeeded in tottering to his feet.

These things served to bring him back to a realisation of his actual surroundings. He was somewhere in the north of France, fallen in a skirmish with the enemy and miles away from where the candle was beaming a welcome between the flower-pots on the window-ledge at home. Yet a light was certainly shining in the near distance, and in gaining this beacon lay his one hope.

He was near enough now to see that he had been led to the blackened ruins of a roofless church. It had evidently been heavily shelled, and fire had completed the work of devastation. In the desecrated sanctuary only a statue of the Virgin Mother with the Divine Child in her arms remained intact. The statue stood in a niche near what had once been the high altar, and before this shrine a little old peasant woman had set a lighted candle.

The old woman was kneeling, chaplet in hand, and saying her prayers aloud when Terence staggered in.

"Ah, good mother!" he gasped, and with that fell in a dead swoon on the altar steps.

On the Feast of the Epiphany, the last of the twelve days during which, according to the old Celtic tradition, the gates of Paradise remain open, a letter reached the moorland farm. It bore the French post-mark, but it was not addressed in Terence's handwriting.

His mother knelt down close beneath the crucifix hanging on the wall. Only so could she summon up courage to tear open the envelope. Though her lips were paralyzed with foreboding, her heart cried out in an agony of supplication which was suddenly to be changed to a cry of joy and relief.

"Darling Mother," she read, "I hope you are well. I send you my fondest greetings. Although wounded I am in the best of spirits. And why I'm here at all and coming home to you the first minute possible is all on account of your Christmas candle. . . ."

Eileen covered her face with her hands, and then what passed was all between her and God.

A NUN OF TYBURN CONVENT.

Literary Notes.

One of the most versatile of the younger school of writers who have written out of the fullness of their hearts' love for Ireland is Brian O'Higgins, and in the four books that have just been issued by Messrs. Whelan and Son, Ormond Quay, Dublin, we have abundant evidence of that versatility, though much more could easily be produced. Humour, pathos, patriotic fire, deep religious feeling, flow from his prolific pen, and always there is a freshness and a true ring about all his work that lends a charm to the simplest sketch or poem or story, and that shows how well the author knows and how strongly he loves the people of whom he writes.

HEARTS OF GOLD is a volume of stories and sketches redolent of the Christmas spirit. Every single one of them deals with Christmas or the New Year, and the glamour of the beautiful festival that touches every Christian heart simply holds the reader in its tender embrace and leaves in his heart a feeling of gratitude for the blessings and the gifts that God has given to man. The book is handsomely bound in full cloth, and the price is 2s. net (postage 4d. extra).

FUN O' THE FORGE is a tonic and messenger of mirth. The stories are told by Ned McGrane, a genial and lovable blacksmith, in his forge in Ballinagore, and everyone of them might be taken and proudly exhibited to the world as a sample of true, clean, Irish wit. The price is 2s. net (postage 4d. extra).

GLEN-NA-MONA is a collection of vivid pen-pictures of life in an Irish countryside, and lovable indeed are the characters that stand out from the pages of the book, winning our sympathy, our admiration, and our love. The book may have its blemishes, but we forget them as we listen to the story of poor Phil Flanagan in the "house among the bushes" or feel the tears start to our eyes at the thought of Maire Mahony's unbroken dream or sit in the shadows of the old school with the master who has taught his last lesson and goes to meet the "White Rose" of his heart "in the land where dreaming is no more and vivid living is eternal." Price 2s. net. (postage 4d. extra).

SONGS OF THE SACRED HEART is a beautiful little book of religious poems in the best style of a poet who has always devoted his gift of song to the praise of God and of his Blessed Mother. Every feeling of the human heart is portrayed without waste of words and in the simplest language, while devotion and reverence breathe in every line of the forty poems which the book contains. The price of the volume is 1s. 6d. (postage 3d. extra). The four books are creditably produced by the publisher, and any one of them would be a most suitable and seasonable present at Christmastide.

ST. ANTHONY'S TREASURY (published at the office of "St. Anthony's Annals," 14 Temple Street, Dublin), contains a splendid collection of prayers (especially to Irish Saints), litanies and novenas, and has the imprimatur of the Archbishop of Dublin. We should like to see this excellent manual in the hands of every Irish Catholic; it is well calculated to aid and foster devotion, and would prove an admirable Christmas gift.

IRELAND: A SONG OF HOPE, AND OTHER POEMS, by Padric Gregory. (The Talbot Press, Dublin.) The poetic genius of the author shines forth in this delightful volume, and reveals him as one of Ireland's sweetest and most gifted writers of song. The work contains Poems and Ballads relating to Ireland; Christmas Carols and Ballads; Old-world Ballads; Memorial Verses; Sacred Verses; Free translations from the Irish; and Miscellaneous Poems. The work is excellently and attractively produced by the publishers and the price is 2s. 6d. net.

Coir na Teine.

Tá an NodlaíS AS dhuirim linn aísir—aimpíir éapadair asur
cúime asur spáó—asur ceapair so mba deap
BEANNACTA NA NODLAÍS. an nio é cúio beas de gúideanna asur de
beannaicta na nSaeóeal do cup ríor díó anro
coir na teine. AS reo iad map rin asur mo
beannaict féin i n-aoinefeact leo :

1. So otusa Dia ronap asur rólár duit, spárta asur
beannaict; asur so bfeiciró tú Mac na nÓige so brátaó.
2. So otusa Muiré díir so raib ainm mair íora rspíócta
ar báir do éioide-re.

Íora asam-ra asur asat-ra, a éapa mo éioide.

Asur rinne as íora so héas ir a coiróce.

3. So otisíó Muiré asur íora irteac in do éioide-re,

so nbeanairó Siao comuiró ann so haoibinn;

so bpanairó Siao asat sac lá ir sac oiróce,

ir so nbeanairó Siao rona tú so bap ir a coiróce.

4. So otusa an leand íora ronap asur rólár duit, rólur asur
ríotóáin; raogal fada rultmar rúgac ir deas-béapac epáibteac:

So scaitiró tú Corp Cíóirta so dútpeactac naomta an
uair a éasfar tú; asur so bfeiciró tú íora asur Muiré re
bplaitéar so brátaó.

5. So mba peact fearr tú bliam ó anoct

loir anam asur corp;

An spárta ir mó, an peacac ir luza,

Spáó Dé asur spáó na comairan,

Sabáilte ar an-bap, ar bap peacac;

Spárta Dé i nSac mte dainféar.

6. Sean Dé asur sean daoine so raib orair ar peac na
blana,

Spáó díir Dé asur spáó séar na scomairan so raib
scomuiróe 'nbúr seioiróib;

Sláinte anma asur cuirp so otusa Dia díó;

Náp feiciró mair rúil, náp glacairó mair lám, náp rmaoinisíó
mair seioiróe.

Nio ar bit a bainfeac díó mair seioiróe de'n glóir ríoruiróe
p. íora do rabáil

'S a mácar gléiseal;

'S na plaitéar so bpaóiró tú,

Asur bap i nEirinn.

Amen, a Císeapna!

9. So otisíó tú faoi bpat bpióe ar lois Cíóirta so
ríogacta Dé!

10. Beannaict an leinó íora, asur a mácar opt!

muirí na móna.



A Literary Circle for Young Readers of "The Cross"

Conducted by FRANCIS.

RULES OF THE GUILD.

I. The Guild of Blessed Gabriel is a literary circle open to boys and girls under 18 years of age.

II. The members will be expected to spread devotion to Blessed Gabriel or Our Lady of Sorrows, by practising the virtues of purity, charity, and truth, and by living lives worthy of him who is to be their model and guide.

III. They will at all times observe the conditions under which the competition will be held.

IV. They will endeavour to bring as many new members as they can into the Guild of Blessed Gabriel.

ONCE more we approach the holy season of love and peace and good will, the season of remembrance and kindness and gladness. But this Christmas, as has been the case every year since the horrible war fires were lighted in Europe, many a home will be desolate, many a chair will be vacant, and many a young heart will sigh in vain for the coming of Santa Claus. All the more are we called upon to search with eyes of love for the poor and lonely and to give them all the comfort and cheer in our power. My fondest wish for you all is that, on Christmas morning, you may see in the smile of the Christ-Child your reward and your share of thanks for kindness shown to the poor and lowly that He loves.

This has come to be a special feature of our Guild, and I know from the members' letters that it is very highly appreciated by all—even by readers of "The Cross" who are not members of the Guild, Miss M. B. O'Neill sends a prose poem this month, and here is an extract from it:—"The old sweet wish—"

A holy, happy Christmas—is sent from my heart to all the dear little ones I have met within the magic circle of the Guild. For the Guild itself and for its worthy President I send my warmest wishes that the Child-God may bless in His own sweet way that beautiful garden wherein I have found so many joys, and that He may whisper softly to Francis on Christmas morning at Mass how tenderly we all remember him in our prayers and how we beg of Him to bless our friend and guide with every priceless gift that He alone can give. May he grant many gifts and blessings to the writer of this heart-felt wish and guard her in all her ways! Our other songster sings a wish for Ireland that her fellow-members of the Guild will prize, and for which they will repay Lillian Nally with many a prayer:—

TO THE CHILDREN OF THE GUILD.

When on Christmas Day you kneel to pray,
Remember Ireland in her sorrow;
Pray unceasingly that hope may light
Her pathway to the radiant morrow.

Long, long, O Lord, she has waited bound
In fetters strong and thralldom's chain,
Loose them, O Lord, and set her free;
Place in her hands her suffering's gain.

Halo the dear head with Freedom's crown,
Gems of faith and love rarer than gold,
And lead our Queen thro' gates of dawning
Into the long-watched, waited goal.

Lila Mairé Nic au fáilte.

Before proceeding to the letters that always make me glad and young, I must inform the members that I have received an ultimatum from the Editor to the effect that the Guild must be kept within the four-page limit in future. So I appeal to them

to make everything intended for publication as brief as possible, especially the essays. From Hollymount, Co. Mayo, comes **May A. J. Bennett**, a new member, who is heartily welcome. She was late for last month's competition. Thanks to **Eibhlís Seoighe** for her wittily-worded invitation. I think another hand and head had something to do with it also. I must endeavour to accept it if I can commandeer an aeroplane. Three new members from Mullingar are **Dorothy Mitchell, Maura Wheeler, and Tommy Wheeler**, to whom and to the other wee members at home (including the eight months' old one) I extend the heartiest of welcomes. I'm sure they'll give a good account of themselves in the Guild. A kind letter, as usual, from my dear friend **Mary Rennie**, who speaks in the highest terms of praise of our distinguished poets. I am already looking forward to Mary's long letter next month. **Leo McCabe** writes from no address to introduce himself, **T. Brindley**, and **D. Fitzgerald**. They are very welcome, but won't they write, giving their full names, address, and age? When only "T" and "D" are put down I don't know whether it is "Teresa" and "Dora" or "Tom" and "Donal." Members should always sign their names in full. Our energetic member in Laytown, Co. Dublin, **Cait Ni Dubhshlaine**, brings me six new and welcome recruits this month, whose names are **Nancy Lyons, Molly Jordan, Molly Delany, Bridie Purfield, Fannie Wade, and Brigid Wade**. More power to Cait! The shortest letter I have ever received has come from **Mary Ryan**, Convent School, Mountrath. Here it is in full:—"Dear Francis—Will you please receive me into your Guild?" Could anything be more satisfying to the Editor than that? Mary is heartily welcome and I hope to hear from her often, but I trust all her letters will not be quite as short as the first. **Josephine Preston** is a little girl in Birmingham, England, who reads "The Cross" every month and wishes to be a member of the Guild. We give her a warm Irish welcome and trust she will spend many a pleasant hour in our midst. **Katie O'Sullivan** is a new member from the Convent School in famous Ballybunion. Who could refuse a welcome to a cailín from Kerry of the kingly hills and kindly hearts? I trust Katie will bring many new members to us from Ballybunion. **Angela Murphy** praises her prize volume very highly, and says that everybody is delighted with it. A hearty welcome to **John Hendrick**, of Cork. I'm sure he will be a hard-working, earnest member. The following communique from **Lilian M. Nally** speaks for itself:—Please express my gratitude to Margaret P. Keogh for her kind sympathy and appreciation. We stretch our arms in welcome to our brilliant comrade Rita and her allies, whom we "grapple to our hearts with hooks of steel." Well we know the strength of the Connacians and we are not surprised that cold shivers are running down the spine of that formidable Commandant of the O'Neill tribe. To Rita and to all my dear friends in the Guild (war enemies included) I wish the very happiest Xmas they have ever known.

Here comes our gigantic new battalion, comprising 120 soldiers. Who said "false prophet?"

Under command of **Captain Eibhlís Seoighe**—Patrick Mannion, Kitty O'Reilly, Brian Gogan, Rita O'Connor, Eileen O'Connor, May O'Toole, May

McCormac, Patty Mullens, Eileen O'Reilly, Eva O'Reilly, Ita M'Loughlin, Dodo Kelly, Kathleen Davis, Hugh Duffy, Florrie Davis, Joseph Dowling, Maureen Davis, Aggie Davis, Michael Dowling, Charlotte Mullens, May Keating, Nora Black, Owen Dowling, Teddy Black, Bessie Mannion, May Harding, Patrick M'Loughlin, Bernard M'Loughlin, Madge O'Callaghan.

Under command of **Captain Ellis Nally**—Brian Killeen, Milton Killeen, Roma Killeen, Roisin O'Leary, Maeve O'Leary, Dermot O'Leary, Mary de Clercq, Mary Gallagher, Lily O'Donnell, Maire Noreen O'Donnell, Teresa O'Donnell, Nellie Glynn, Brigid Glynn, Bernadette O'Donnell, Nellie Walsh, Sarah Ruane, Mary Ellen Ruane, Irene Joyce, May Morris, Olive Monaghan, Sheila Monaghan, Nancy Duffy, Nellie M'Glade, Kathleen M'Glade.

Under command of **Captain Maureen O'Sullivan**—Alice M'Cabe, Annie Bermingham, Eileen Boylam, Nora M'Cabe, Seamus O'Sullivan, May Bermingham, Kitty Finlazon, Alfred Finlazon, Mary Finlazon, Marcel George Cornue, Nora Bolton, Joseph Bolton, Teresa Bolton, Angela Finlazon, Maura White, Brendan White, Philamena Finlazon, Gerard Finlazon, Aggie O'Callaghan.

Under command of **Captain Patrick Hanly**—Emily Hanly, Raphael Hanly, Artie O'Connor, Bridie Dolan, Aiden Hanly, Lily Dolan, Mollie Connor, Annie Garvey, Clare Hanly, Joe Mason, Eddie Hanly, Dick M'Hugh, Eugene Donnellan, Fanny O'Reilly, Lorcan Gogan, Eilis Gogan, Bertie Fitzgerald, Frank Fitzgerald, Sadie Fitzgerald, Eileen Duffy, Brian Duffy, Kathleen Fitzgerald, Michael Fitzgerald, John Fitzgerald.

Under command of **Captain Nancy Joyce**—Peggy M'Ardle, Malachy Joyce, May Dowling, Joseph Joyce, Jack Benson, Annie Farry, May Curley, Fred Curley, Josephine M'Enearey, May Lennard, Tom Lennard, Pakey Lennard, Tom Joyce, Frank Joyce, J. P. Roughneen, Myles O'Donnell, Padraic O'Donnell, Brendan Cranny, Michael Cranny, Mary Callaghan, Jack Callaghan, Annie Murphy.

A large number of competitors were late this month and their letters could not be dealt with.

(1). All newcomers will please write a personal note to **Francis**, apart from their competition papers, asking to be admitted to membership of the Guild. (2). Always put you **name** and **address** on your competition paper, whether you send a letter or not. (3.) **Orders for copies of "The Cross," etc., and all business letters should be sent to the Manager.**

For the best essay on the question: "Is the Giving of Christmas Gifts Undesirable?" the prize is awarded to **John P. Hendrick**, 35 Sunset Place, St. Luke's, Cork. A special prize goes to **Maureen M'Nally**, 49 Templemore Street, Belfast. For the best "Letter to Santa Claus" the prize is awarded to **Maura Wheeler**, Lynn Cottage, Mullingar, Westmeath. A special prize goes to **J. J. Murphy**, Railway Street, Armagh (whom I nearly disqualified for not giving full name).

JANUARY COMPETITIONS.

I.—For Members over 12 and under 18 years of age.

A handsome book prize will be given for the best short paper on "The New Year and the Old."

II.—For Members under 12 years of age.

A handsome book prize will be given for the best drawing of a Christmas Tree.

Competitors will please remember the following rules:—All competition papers must be certified by some responsible person as being the **unaided** work of the competitors. They must have attached to them the coupon which will be found in this issue (one coupon will be sufficient for all the members of a family) and must be written on **one side only** of the paper. They must be sent so as to reach the office not later than by **first post** on **December 14th**. All letters to be addressed: **Francis**, c/o "The Cross," St. Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin.

PRIZE ESSAY.

"Is the Giving of Christmas Gifts Undesirable?"

It has often been said that the surest road to happiness is that which we travel when we make others happy, and no better proof of this can be found

than the Christmas season. For, on examining carefully the pleasures which constitute Christmas, it will be seen that they are mainly derived from making others happy. Take, for example, the custom of sending Christmas cards to one's friends; what is the object of this but to promote the felicity of others? And so it is with the cheery greeting, "I wish you a happy Christmas." Who is there that, being thus addressed, does not feel the happier for it? Why, it makes one's heart leap for very joy.

There is, also, another custom of this time of "peace and good will" which contributes in a large degree to its enjoyment. It is the giving of Christmas presents. To trace back the origin of this practice to the gifts of the three Wise Kings to their Infant Saviour, on that first Christmas morning, would not require a very powerful flight of imagination. These were the first Christmas presents, and those who commemorate the custom to-day should emulate the spirit in which they were given.

Some there are who will say: "This is all very fine about the great happiness derived from making Christmas gifts; but I give numerous presents every year and so far have experienced no happiness in doing so." If there are any whose case this represents, have they, I wonder, ever reflected on where the fault lies? With the custom or themselves? It is quite evident from their argument that they have not. When a good habit is formed by a person it will sometimes be found that after a time he performs that habit in a mechanical way, and then—astonished at receiving no benefit from it—attributes the blame to the habit instead of to the manner in which it is performed. To the giving of Christmas gifts this may be applied with equal truth.

This is a beautiful custom, but, when mechanically or perfunctorily executed, it cannot be efficacious, and those who carry it out in such a manner should blame—not the custom—but themselves when they derive no happiness from it.

Again, some think only of the intrinsic value of the gift received and not of the friendship which it symbolises and which prompted its bestowal; consequently it brings them but a poor measure of enjoyment. If this were the rule (and not the exception) then the grand old custom would be nothing more than a formal exchange of goods unaccompanied by any feelings of love and charity, and all will agree that it should cease at once rather than descend to such a level. Christmas presents, given with the spirit in which they originated, lighten the heart more than the purse.

If there is one thing more than another which tends to rob of all its attractiveness the practice of making gifts, it is the feeling given you by some people that they expect them. We have all heard the story of the little boy who, as Christmas approached, wrote to his rich aunt thanking her again for **last year's** gift, and do we not sometimes find people (not children) who imitate him, inasmuch as they drop very lucid hints, to their friends, as to the particular present they would like? And then, if the hint is taken, oh! they are so astonished and "cannot imagine" how the giver knew "it was the very thing they wished for." If this could be taken as interpreting the manner in which the custom is generally carried out, I would say that the giving of Christmas presents was very undesirable indeed. A gift should be "a cementer of friendship."

To the sceptic who scoffs at present-giving I address this question: "What is the object of the Christmas Season?" Is it not to foster a spirit of "peace and goodwill"? How, then, I ask you, can this be achieved unless the customs which are necessary to its fulfilment be upheld? Therefore, is it not clear that the giving of Christmas gifts—conducting as it does to a feeling of general peace and good will—is not only desirable, but essential? What greater or more convincing proof of sympathy than a gift? Made in the right spirit it fills the heart of the giver, as well as the recipient, with a great happiness, thus commemorating in a suitable way the present-giving of the three Wise Kings on that first Christmas morning, and as a remembrance of such it should be cherished and observed until time merges into eternity.

JOHN P. HENDRICK.

Passionist Chronicle.

Basilica of SS. John and Paul, Rome.—Most Rev. Father Silvius, C.P., Father-General of the Passionists, has issued a letter to all the members of the Congregation in which he prescribes Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and certain prayers on 27th November, in connection with the final stages of the cause of Blessed Gabriel, Passionist student, which will be considered by the Sacred Congregation of Rites upon that date.

Highgate—St. Joseph's.—In accordance with the wish of His Holiness the Pope, Solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated on 4th November for those who have fallen in the war. Gascoligni's Missa de Requie, with Communion piece, from Vittoria, was rendered by the choir. The service concluded with Mozart's De Profundis, which was repeated at the evening devotions.

The music of the Mass on All Souls' Day was sung by the Brothers and boys of St. Aloysius' College.

Rev. Father Norbert, C.P., preached a course of sermons on Purgatory, on the Sunday evenings of November, which were well attended.

Rev. Father Fidelis, C.P., preached on behalf of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference on Sunday, 11th November. There is a special strain on the funds of the Society this year, owing to the increased cost of living, which affects the poor so much, and we are grateful to those who contributed towards the maintenance of the Society's beneficent work.

Mount Argus—St. Paul's.—Very large congregations attended the course of sermons on Purgatory which Rev. Father Ignatius, C.P., preached during November.

Very Rev. Father Francis, C.P., Rector, made an appeal on behalf of the Altar Society on Sunday, 18th Nov. The members of the Society are doing admirable work in providing and keeping in repair vestments and altar linen, and we are grateful to those who kindly contributed to the funds of the Society on this occasion.

Glasgow—St. Mungo's.—The Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Canonization of St. Paul of the Cross were observed

with befitting solemnity on Sunday October 21st. His Grace Archbishop Maguire presided, and preached at the Solemn High Mass, the celebrant of which was Very Rev. Father Philip, C.P.; Deacon, Rev. Father Cyril, C.P.; Sub-deacon, Rev. Father Marcellus, C.P.; Master of Ceremonies, Rev. Father Romuald, C.P.; Very Rev. Mgr. Canon J. Ritchie, V.G.; Very Rev. M. Canon Hughes, M.R.; Very Rev. M. Canon McNairney, M.R., were assistants at the throne. Very Rev. J. J. Canon Dyer, M.R.; Very Rev. T. P. Canon O'Reilly, M.R.; Rev. Father Paschal, O.F.M.; Very Rev. Father M'Mahon, S.J.; Rev. Dr. J. Mullin, M.R.; and Rev. D. Collins were present.

After the High Mass His Grace the Archbishop officiated at Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, which continued throughout the day. Large numbers of the faithful visited the Church during the day to avail themselves of the Portiuncula Indulgence privilege which the Church enjoyed. In the afternoon at 4 p.m. Rev. Father Louis gave a special service for the children. At 7 p.m. Rev. Father Boniface, C.P., preached a panegyric of St. Paul of the Cross, and the celebration concluded with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament and the singing of the "Te Deum" during Benediction. The Church was splendidly attended at these services, the people fully realising and deeply appreciating their significance.

To aid the benevolent work of St. Vincent de Paul Society, Rev. Father Cyril, C.P., preached the annual Charity Sermon in aid of the Conference at St. Stephen's, Dalmeir, on Sunday, October 28th, and Very Rev. Father Alban, C.P. (Rector), preached on behalf of St. Patrick's Conference at Anderston on Sunday, November 18th.

Deep sorrow is felt here at the death of Ex-Baillie Patrick O'Hare, which took place at Monaghan on November 9th. Mr. O'Hare had long associations with St. Mungo's, to which he was deeply attached, and every movement for the welfare of the Mission had his whole-hearted sympathy and support. During his life in Glasgow Mr. O'Hare fulfilled many positions in the civic life of the community as member of

Glasgow Parish Council, Glasgow Town Council, besides representing North Monaghan in Parliament.

The Children of Mary's Sodality held a Social in St. Paul's Hall on Friday, 2nd inst. About 100 members and friends were present and spent an enjoyable evening. The Social was arranged by Rev. Father Germain, C.P.

Broadway—St. Saviour's.—On the occasion of the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the religious profession of Rev. Father Placid Wareing, C.P., on 13th November, a telegram was received from Rome announcing that His Holiness the Pope sent his Blessing to the venerable Passionist. The Rev. Father was the recipient of numerous messages conveying the congratulations and good wishes of his friends, including readers of "The Cross," who have so much appreciated his beautiful articles in our magazine. "Ad multos annos."

Harborne—St. Mary's.—Thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Kemp, Richmond Hill, the children of St. Mary's School had an enjoyable afternoon recently when they had a treat and musical entertainment. Mrs. Kemp, assisted by the teachers, Miss Nolan, Mrs. McDonnell and Miss Flattery, kindly dispensed the good things provided.

On the Sunday following All Souls' Day a Solemn Requiem was sung by Father Bernardine for the souls of soldiers and sailors who have lost their lives in the war. In the evening Father Thomas preached on the Doctrine of Purgatory.

Carmarthen — St. Mary's.—Ammanford mission, which is in charge of the Passionist Fathers, is making good progress. The fervent little congregation appreciate very much the additional privilege accorded them recently of having evening devotions.

Rev. Father Finbar, C.P., has been the recipient of a presentation from his friends in Harborne, where he laboured for many years prior to his appointment as Vicar of St. Mary's, Carmarthen. The Rev. Father, in appropriate

terms, expressed his gratitude for this token of esteem and appreciation on the part of the Catholics of Harborne.

Sutton—St. Anne's.—Very Rev. Father Malachy, C.P., Rector, Highgate, preached the annual Charity Sermons on 28th October to large congregations.

One of the features of the month of the Holy Souls, during which several Requiem Masses were celebrated, was the daily attendance of the school children at Mass, many of whom are daily communicants.

The Catholic Young Men's Society recently presented one of their members (Private Kennedy) with a dainty tea service on the occasion of his marriage to Miss Annie Glover. Both are much esteemed members of St. Anne's congregation.

The members of the Catholic Young Men's Society have not forgotten their fellow-members who have been called to the colours but take care to send them suitable gifts regularly.

Belfast—Holy Cross.—The three weeks' mission given by Very Rev. Father Egwin, C.P.; Rev. Father Richard, C.P.; and Rev. Father Cornelius, C.P., concluded on Sunday, 4th November, with the renewal of Baptismal Vows and Papal Blessing. An immense congregation attended the closing ceremonies, and the scene presented was inspiring and devotional.

It is gratifying to state that the Men's and Women's branches of the Confraternity of the Passion have received a large number of new members. The meeting of the Children of Mary Sodality was held on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Fr. Herbert, C.P., delivered the first of a course of lectures for November on Sunday, 11th, to a vast congregation. The annual entertainment given by the school children took place in Ardoyne Hall in November. It reflected great credit on those who had charge of their training.

Fr. Augustine, C.P., has been engaged on a Mission at Lavey, in the Diocese of Kilmore.

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We have received 2s. 6d. from E. J. M. towards the expenses of the Canonization of Blessed Gabriel and the Cause of the Little Flower.

